

State Representative Peggy Welch

Helping Hoosier Families

I 13th Indiana General Assembly, Spring 2004

Session Report

Dear District 60 Citizen,

Well, your Indiana General Assembly completed its work on March 4. Some have said that we really did not accomplish much, but it is my hope that after reviewing just a few examples of bills that have become new laws, you will agree with me that we did some good things for Hoosiers.

As you may recall, we had our annual Organization Day on November 18th. This is typically a one-day event and then we return in January. Because of our concern with the effect of reassessment, we extended that one day of session into three weeks. This was after the House Ways and Means Committee, of which I am a member, toured the state holding eight hearings on the impact of reassessment. We then took a Christmas recess and began work again the first week of January.

Since this was a short session, meaning a non-budget year, the number of bills introduced and enacted into law was less than a long session. Ninety-eight bills are now law out of 989 that were introduced.

Inside, you will find a brief description of some of these bills. If you would like a complete listing of the state's new laws, you can access it at www.in.gov/legislative or I can send to you a digest of the bills. If you have questions about bills that either passed or failed, please contact me. There may be bills that "died," but whose language was included in other bills that are now law.

I am now back to work as a nurse at Bloomington Hospital, but I continue my duties as a legislator throughout the year. Please feel free to contact me with ideas for legislation, questions about legislative issues, or if you need help with a state agency.

It is my hope that you have a wonderful and safe spring!

Sincerely,





Representative
Peggy Welch

Creating Hoosier Jobs

Protecting and creating Hoosier jobs and businesses were among the issues of most concern in the 2004 General Assembly. Three bills and a resolution were passed that will aid in the retention and creation of jobs as well as encourage business development and corporate responsibility.

House Bill 1365 contains language that I advocated throughout the 2004

legislative session that allows **certified technology parks to be created in or around active military bases in Indiana.**

I believe that if the new economy is to be based on technology, then the research and development that is taking place at Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center offers a perfect opportunity to forge a partnership with the private sector and our higher education system in creating new types of businesses. These businesses could offer good-paying jobs for numerous Hoosiers. In addition to the bill being signed by Gov. Joe Kernan on March 17, the Governor, myself and others pictured left of this article toured the **Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center** on March 19 with Secretary of the Navy Gordon England.



Secretary of the Navy Gordon England toured Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center and witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Crane and the Indiana National Guard. Pictured are: back row, (left to right) Representative David Crooks, Secretary England, Representative Peggy Welch, and Congressman John Hostettler. Seated (left to right) Crane Captain Dan Wise, Governor Joe Kernan, and Major General R. Martin Umbarger from the Indiana National Guard.

House Bill 1080 will help **stimulate Indiana's economy** by providing a price preference to Indiana businesses for public works and procurement contracts. This legislation will focus on Indiana companies first as suppliers for goods and services the state is interested in purchasing.

House Bill 1434 **will benefit low-income businesses by fostering economic development opportunities** by providing grants for training and technical assistance. The microenterprise partnership program created under the bill will provide assistance to businesses with fewer than five employees.

House Resolution 47 calls on the President and Congress to address a growing trade imbalance that has resulted in the loss of more than 2 million manufacturing jobs in the U.S. since 2001. It asks that **trade agreements require that corporations pay fair and competitive wages**, respect the rights of workers to unionize, and adopt workplace safety and anti-pollution standards equal to those in our country. The resolution also encourages the federal government to **provide economic incentives to sectors that have seen record job losses** due to NAFTA and address the adverse effects on trade caused by countries that artificially lower the value of their currency relative to the dollar.

Helping Hoosier Families

Legislation enacted during this session

There were several other significant pieces of legislation passed by the General Assembly. Below is a sampling of the 98 bills passed by the Indiana General Assembly.

Protecting Children and Consumers

House Bill 1194 Child Abuse Reporting—requires additional public disclosure of information about any child who dies as a result of abuse or neglect. It also creates statewide child fatality review teams.

House Bill 1245 Crime Victims; Neglect of Dependent—increases the penalty for neglect of a dependent if the neglect results in the death of a child. It also increases the penalty for contributing to the delinquency of a minor if a person 21 years or older provides alcohol or a controlled substance to a minor, and the consumption of that alcohol or drugs contributes to cause a death.

Senate Bill 194 CHINS and Child Fatality Review—provides added protections for all children in a home where abuses have taken place.

House Bill 1229 Predatory Lending—called The Indiana Homeowner Protection Act, places tougher restrictions on the practice called “predatory lending.” We will be protecting homeowners from overpriced loans with unreasonable terms that often are impossible to pay back, placing people at risk of losing their homes through foreclosure.

House Bill 1449 Curfew Violations—helps restore the constitutionality of Indiana’s curfew law by including provisions that protect minors who are exercising First Amendment rights.

House Bill 1029 Child Support Withholding from Tax Refunds—provides that custodial parents may bring a court action to recover delinquent child support by intercepting the state income tax refund of the parent who owes the support.

House Bill 1019 Bull Ride Simulators and Indoor Pyrotechnics—requires the adoption of rules regulating safety standards for bull ride simulators and requires the Fire Prevention and Building Safety Commission to adopt rules for the issuance of permits for supervised public displays of fireworks and implement a statewide code for the display of indoor pyrotechnics.

Fighting Drug, Alcohol Abuse

House Bill 1136—Methamphetamine (Meth) Task Force—creates a task force responsible for a long-term strategic action plan to combat the spread of methamphetamine. This group will include representatives from law enforcement, health care, family and social services and education.

House Bill 1264 Ignition Interlock Systems—expands the ability of courts to use ignition interlock devices to prevent some people convicted of driving under the influence from operating a motor vehicle if they have consumed alcohol.

House Bill 1394 Driving While Intoxicated and Causing Death—penalizes anyone over 21 years of age who causes the death of another person while driving while intoxicated. It also penalizes any person over age 21 who operates a motor vehicle while intoxicated or using illegal drugs if the car has a passenger less than 18 years of age.

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Pages and school groups regularly visit Representative Peggy Welch in the chamber of the House of Representatives.



Rep. Welch addresses the House of Representatives.

Helping Hoosier Families



Representative Peggy Welch (left) discusses legislation with Representative Linda Lawson.

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Legislation Enacted

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Property Tax Relief and Reform

House Bill 1005 Property Tax Study Commission—creates a commission to explore alternatives to property taxes to fund local government. Homeowners get property tax bills that will show how each person's property taxes are divided among each taxing unit, including local schools. The bill also establishes a Local Government Study Commission that will examine the current structure of local governments in Indiana and make recommendations on how they can be improved.

Senate Bill 296 Property Tax Deduction Increases—increases property tax deductions for seniors on lower incomes, World War I veterans, the blind and disabled as well as those that are rehabilitating a home.

Senate Bill 1 Property Taxes—contains nearly \$500 million in protection for homeowners, businesses and farms from property tax increases. It provides additional protections from both the court-ordered reassessment and unchecked local property tax increases.

Helping Businesses

House Bill 1024 Industrial Recovery Tax Credit—reduces the minimum size required for a building to be eligible for the industrial recovery tax credit from 300,000 to 250,000 square feet.

House Bill 1436 Women and Minority Businesses—provides that standards developed and a certification made under the minority business enterprise law apply to standards and certifications for minority business enterprises and women's business enterprises under any other Indiana law.

Education Issues

House Bill 1308 Cultural Competency in Education—defines "cultural competency" and sets forth teacher training, professional development and school plan requirements for achieving cultural competency.

House Bill 1256 Special Purpose School Buses—allows a school corporation to use special purpose buses to provide regular transportation of school children from one school to another school.

Rep. Peggy Welch

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